

# CALIFORNIA JOURNAL OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

FEBRUARY, 1961



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VOLUME XXIX

FEBRUARY, 1961

NUMBER 3

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The California Journal of Elementary Education is published quarterly in August, November, February, and May by the California State Department of Education. It is distributed without charge to school officials in California primarily concerned with the administration and supervision of elementary education and to institutions engaged in the training of teachers for the elementary school. To others the subscription price is \$1.00 a year; the price for single copies is 30 cents. Subscriptions should be sent to the Bureau of Textbooks and Publications.

Entered as second-class matter September 13, 1932, at the Post Office at Sacramento, California, under the Act of August 24, 1912.



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## EDITORIAL COMMENT AND NEWS NOTES

### THIS ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL

Many people co-operated in the preparation of this issue of the *Journal*. Myron Schussman, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services, and Lola Fay Gordon, General Supervisor and Co-ordinator of Science and Social Studies, Office of Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools, worked on the project from the beginning and enlisted the co-operation in the actual writing of the following Santa Clara educators:

Emma V. Henning, General Supervisor, Mountain View Elementary School District

Helen Petersen, Director of Instruction, Campbell Union Elementary School District

Frances B. Ray, Visiting Librarian, Palo Alto Unified School District

Charlotte Rideout, Associate Professor of English (retired), San Jose State College

Ray Ruf, Director of Elementary Education, Santa Clara City Elementary School District

Albert A. Vatuone, Assistant Superintendent, Cambrian Elementary School District

Grace Rowe Walkington, Director of Instruction and Curriculum Co-ordinator, Los Gatos Union Elementary School District

Supervisory personnel in Santa Clara County was involved in local programs emphasizing children's literature in their elementary schools. A pictorial record of children's activities was kept and from these picture selections were made. Appreciation is expressed to the following persons for these contributions:

Mrs. Mildred Di Paolo, Assistant Superintendent,  
Instruction, Sunnyvale

Robert Infelise, Director of Instructional Services, Union  
Elementary School District

Esther Jones, Instructional Consultant, Los Altos Elementary  
School District

Paul Lozar, Librarian, Cambrian Elementary School District

Mrs. Ethel Mahan, General Consultant, Cupertino  
Elementary School District

H. Barrett Patdon, Director of Audio-Visual Services, Office  
of the Santa Clara County Superintendent of Schools

Robert E. Shutes, Co-ordinator, Palo Alto City Unified  
School District

Mrs. Doris Susanj, Director of Curriculum, Jefferson Union  
Elementary School District

Robert S. Tack, Principal, El Quito Park Elementary  
School, Moreland Elementary School District

While the preparation of the issue was in progress, it was considered important to find out about the present status of children's literature in the preparation of elementary school teachers. J. D. Young, Associate Professor, Orange County State College, undertook the study that is presented in this issue. With Pearl L. Ward, Dr. Young also provided an invaluable description of what constitutes a suitable approach to a course in children's literature and story telling. This article will be of great value to educators engaged in the pre-service and in-service education of elementary school teachers.

The appearance of the 1960, San Diego Public Schools publication *Creative Writing* led to an invitation to Mrs. Zeta O. Doyle, Director of Instruction, to prepare an article indicating the relation of children's literature to their creative writing and to share with a wider audience the creative product of San Diego children.



Helen Heffernan has presented her views on creativity and has reported on creative activities of California teachers in the field of children's literature.

Afton Dill Nance has related children's literature to how children learn to read and has warned against falling a victim to the easy answer.

All of the people who participated in the preparation of this issue of the *Journal* will feel well repaid for many hours of writing if elementary school people in California will appraise the opportunities they are affording children to experience their wonderful literary heritage.

#### RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Suggestions for Teaching Foreign Languages by the Audio-Lingual Method: A Manual for Teachers.* Prepared by Gustave Mathieu, Chairman, Department of Foreign Language, Orange County State College, Fullerton, California, and James S. Holton, Assistant Professor of Foreign Language, Sacramento State College, under the direction of Everett V. O'Rourke, Consultant in Secondary Education, California State Department of Education. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXIX, No. 7, July, 1960. Pp. viii + 28.

Because of the introduction of foreign language instruction in some of the elementary schools of the state, this bulletin prepared by the Bureau of Secondary Education and the Bureau of National Defense Education Act Administration may be of interest. The manual is designed to provide assistance to foreign language teachers who are interested in employing new methods of instruction. The suggested pattern drills can be used with or without electromechanical equipment. Information is offered about four basic types of foreign language practice—listening-comprehension, mimicry-memorization, creative practice, and self evaluation.

Copies have been distributed to county superintendents of schools, to superintendents of school districts maintaining secondary schools, to principals of secondary schools, and to heads of foreign language depart-

ments in secondary schools. The price is 25 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

*The Teaching Internship: The Place of Internship Programs in Teacher Education.* Report of the Committee on the Teaching Internship of the California Council on Teacher Education. Prepared by Dorothy S. Blackmore, G. Wesley Sowards, and Clark Robinson, Chairman. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXIX, No. 9, September, 1960. Pp. viii + 32.

This bulletin, which provides an organized statement regarding the development and functions of teaching internship programs, is the result of a three-year study by the Internship Committee of the California Council on Teacher Education. During its study, the committee developed standards for internship programs and analyzed existing practices regarding them in California. The report gives specific instances of persons benefiting from the internship program. Dealt with also are the general characteristics of the internship programs, their place in teacher education, guidelines for developing them and present practices and problems relating to them.

Copies of the bulletin have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools, to the California Council on Teacher Education, and to selected personnel.

*A Guide for the Development of Language Laboratory Facilities.* Prepared by the Bureau of Audio-Visual and School Library Education in co-operation with the Bureau of National Defense Education Act Administration, California State Department of Education. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXIX, No. 10, October, 1960. Pp. viii + 40.

Because of the new stress on learning foreign language by the listening-speaking method, this illustrated bulletin containing information on equipment and materials for language laboratory facilities, will be of interest to personnel at all school levels. Sections of the publication give information on some general points of view regarding language laboratory facilities, types of language laboratories, guidelines for establishing language laboratory facilities, and material and equipment items in language laboratory facilities. It concludes with references for developing such facilities.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools, to principals of junior high schools, senior high schools, and to selected personnel. The price is 35 cents per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

*Administration of the School Food Service Program, Revised.*

School Business Administration Publication No. 2. Compiled and prepared by the School Lunch Office, California State Department of Education. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXIX, No. 13, December, 1960. Pp. viii + 76.

This bulletin is a consolidation of the materials pertaining to regulations, policies, records, and reports that have to do with food service operations in the schools. Sections contain legal provisions relating to school food services, selected regulations of the National School Lunch Program, selected regulations of the Special School Milk Program, school food service accounting, and supplementary management tools.

Procedures presented in the bulletin are designed primarily for use by school districts that do not have trained business staffs. Procedures are merely suggestions and not intended to change or replace business systems that have already proved successful.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools and to principals of elementary schools, junior high schools, senior and four-year high schools in districts not employing superintendents.

*Evaluating Pupil Progress, 1960 Edition.* Prepared by Henry W. Magnuson, Chief, Melvin W. Gipe, Consultant, and Thomas A. Shellhammer, Consultant, Bureau of Education Research. Bulletin of the California State Department of Education, Vol. XXIX, No. 14, December, 1960. Pp. viii + 230.

This 1960 Revision contains information on advances that have been made in measurement during the past eight years since the publication of the original bulletin. In this revision emphasis has been placed on teacher-made tests and reporting procedures. The bulletin's main purpose is to assist teachers in gathering and interpreting evidences of growth in pupils' skills, knowledges, attitudes, and understandings. Chapters cover the role of evaluation in education, testing in an evaluation program, appraising aptitudes, personality development, interests,

and attitudes, techniques for appraising pupil behavior and reporting pupil progress. The publication is liberally illustrated with line drawings.

Copies have been distributed to county, city, and district superintendents of schools and to directors of research and guidance and state college personnel. The price is \$1.00 per copy plus sales tax on California orders.

#### COVER PHOTOGRAPHS

The front cover of this issue of the *Journal* shows kindergarten story time at Stanford Elementary School, Palo Alto. Back cover photos show "discovering through literature" at Stanford Elementary School, Palo Alto (right hand picture); a librarian helping a fourth grade pupil make a selection at Monroe School, Campbell Union School District (left hand picture); and seventh and eighth grade pupils in the school library, Mountain View School District (lower picture).

## BASIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM<sup>1</sup>

Objective evaluations of elementary level instructional programs in children's literature are difficult to find. However, it is apparent that the programs are not wholly satisfactory, for the professional literature contains many statements in which administrators express the opinion that a more effective job of teaching literature is essential. Certain statements which are typical of those expressing this opinion are presented and their implications are discussed in this article. One of these statements follows:

Many children have little or no knowledge of the classics, frequently not so much as a nodding acquaintance. Achievement test results, particularly in the West, bear out the disconcerting truth of this accusation.<sup>2</sup>

The teacher who gives a major share of his energy to the elusive, nonmeasurable aspects of teaching rather than to a narrow focus of skills will eventually get higher test results than he would otherwise. Certainly, the child who works full time with good materials will advance more rapidly in both skill and knowledge than one who works with mediocre material. Literature should, therefore, be taught as an integrated phase of the other curriculum areas so as to encourage the greatest possible achievement in reading, social studies, science, and artistic creativity.

The following two statements are typical of certain criticisms that are made of the literature programs offered in elementary schools:

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Mrs. Emma V. Henning, General Supervisor, Mountain View Elementary School District; Mrs. Frances B. Ray, Visiting Librarian, Palo Alto City Unified School District; Mrs. Charlotte Rideout, Associate Professor of English (Retired), San Jose State College; and Ray Ruf, elementary curriculum co-ordinator, Santa Clara City Elementary School District.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Maib, "Improving Children's Literary Tastes," *Elementary English*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, March, 1959, p. 180.

Literature and personal reading are in some respects the most neglected phases of education today.<sup>3</sup>

There has been a general neglect of literature in all too many elementary schools.<sup>4</sup>

These are severe criticisms, and regardless of one's attitude he must admit there is some justification for the criticisms. However, one must remember that it is easy to criticize the teaching of literature and very difficult to evaluate it objectively.

In general, we may assume that the program is constantly improving even though the first decision as to what constitutes an acceptable approach to the teaching of literature at the elementary school level has not been formulated. There are probably as many ideas regarding the "how and when" in literature as there are regarding the "how and when" in the teaching of a foreign language. It may be wise to examine some of the obstacles and considerations which make drafting and implementing an elementary literature program a difficult task.

The first obstacle obviously involves semantics—the lack of clear definition and common understanding of what constitutes a desirable literature program. What is the difference between reading and literature? What sets apart a book of literary value?

The authors have agreed upon the following definition of literature. A book of literary value is a record of experience written by a person who sees more in life than is evident to the average person, so that he reveals more than the reader would have seen himself. Life is larger, more beautiful, sometimes even more terrible, but always of greater meaning to the reader for having seen it through the author's eyes. Quality literature bears the stamp of a master craftsman, and its effect is in terms of the reader's emotional response or feeling.

The word "reading" in this article refers to the basic reading program. This program, which consists of a series of skills, has as its objectives the mastery of the motor and intellectual skills

<sup>3</sup> Dora V. Smith, *Reading in the Elementary School*, 48th Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Committee on Reading, Part II, Chapter 10. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Betzner, *Exploring Literature with Children in the Elementary School*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1943.

involved in recognizing and understanding the printed word. In brief, reading skill is a means to an end—that of understanding and interpreting printed materials. The basic reading program must precede the study of literature before a child will be able to read literature. However, at the same time he is learning to read, the child can profit from literature that is read to him. And in addition to learning to appreciate literature the child will be acquiring a desire to read and developing essential background for reading. The wise teacher, therefore, provides opportunities for children to listen and enjoy, even as he lays the foundation for mastery of skills which will enable the child to read for information and enjoyment. Since young children can understand and appreciate far beyond their ability to read, a story or poem read aloud can be one of the day's most pleasant and cherished experiences. This listening enjoyment, however, is not limited to the very young. When reading aloud is expressly for sharing a delightful story or poem, the reader's sincerity is quickly conveyed and the age factor disappears almost magically. Frequently the reader's enthusiasm becomes contagious, and as a result the boys and girls are eager to read for themselves. Regardless of purpose, whether for giving pleasure or information, listening enjoyment should be a daily activity.

Inadequate reading skill is perhaps the second major obstacle which children encounter in the literature program. There are, however, degrees of reading skill, and usually the average child beyond the second grade can read sufficiently well that literature may be utilized in the school program. However, the reading level of the literature must be such that the pupils read it with sufficient ease to get a full measure of enjoyment. Successful interpretive experience is impossible and literature reading becomes a routine chore for children who are handicapped by inadequate reading ability. Such children must be helped to acquire the necessary reading skill before they can be expected to gain the rich rewards that literature has to offer.

The third and perhaps the greatest obstacle to improvement of the literature program is the need for more background,



experience, interest, and enthusiasm on the part of teachers. Ideally, the teacher understands, knows, and enjoys good literature and reflects this understanding and enjoyment when working with his pupils. He is alert to moods and emotional climates requiring immediate or long-term action, and he must feel the child's reaction to all of his literary experiences. In addition, he has a broad knowledge of current and classic children's literature, an accurate knowledge of children's capacities, and a sensitive understanding of children's needs.

A teacher and a librarian, each with a background of wide reading experience and an enthusiasm for good literature, can provide teamwork that is conducive to the type of literature program we would encourage. Of great importance to the classroom teacher is a good book list for reference. Such lists are extremely valuable when compiled by the librarian, who is qualified by training and experience to make the judgments involved. However, no such basic list can be completely appropriate for every situation. If the room library is to contain books of especial appeal to its particular users, the librarian's list should be augmented by the teacher's supplemental list. To this end, the classroom teacher must devote considerable time to reading and evaluating children's literature, always assisted by her more personal knowledge of the children—in order that she may introduce many books each year. The supplemental list will include books of wide variety, both in subject matter and in treatment—history, biography, discovery, fiction, fact, fantasy, and poetry. A balanced room library is highly desirable, and it is axiomatic that a child be able to find several books in his room library which he can read and which are especially interesting to him.

When a child reaches the fourth grade, he should keep his own reading record. He can be taught to evaluate the books he has read and to record his evaluations according to the type of books read. Such a technique tends to point up over-similarity in type and enables the teacher to steer the pupil toward more diversity and to guide him toward deeper and richer literary

tastes. This is a continuous, individual process which spans years, involving the seeming paradox of a high level of control of the teaching situation within which the pupil exercises considerable freedom of choice. As a result of this process, the child should select increasingly high quality of experience, acquire depth of understanding, become increasingly familiar with alien cultures, develop interest in exploring the world of imagination, and acquire high standards of literary excellence.

What of the young reader limited in reading taste to a single type of book, such as the horse story? By all means he should be given the opportunity to report on appealing horse stories; in the meantime, however, he should be encouraged to develop other interests. The way may be pointed out with a single observation he can understand—such as, that while strawberries are good to eat, a continuous diet of strawberries would jade the appetite and produce indigestion. Then he may be helped to plan a pattern of growth for diversifying his reading diet. The teacher or librarian could begin by suggesting the reading of a biography of a person in whose life a horse plays a part. From there books dealing with active outdoor adventure of various kinds and books about adventure of the mind and imagination may be suggested. But throughout, this expansion of interest should not be imposed upon the child; it should represent a genuine development of the child's judgment.

Related to the room and school library is the desirability of a regular allotment of time for enjoying old book friends and for getting acquainted with prospective new ones. Sharing books one has enjoyed with others should also be encouraged. Reading aloud is a high-level skill, however, and should be done when the reading process has been reasonably well mastered in terms of fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Telling a story that has appealed to him for the purpose of stimulating interest among his peers is a minor form of sales promotion and usually bears fruit for the pupil who has learned a few "tricks of the trade." Story telling is also a skill, and like other skills must be learned. To give balance, authority, and

standards to a "book-infection" program, the teacher should set the pace by "selling" books, telling stories, and reading aloud materials of universal appeal and attainable level as a stimulant to pupil participation. Displays, guessing games, costume-character days, and creative writing or art related to reading, can all be used to supplement the oral-listening type of sharing. They offer opportunity to children with talents other than verbal and afford a relief from the tension of prolonged listening. They enrich the verbal concepts with visual experience and the sense of play.

A love of reading is one of the greatest gifts which school or home can give to children. Making books easily available for home reading is a powerful means for helping children discover the pleasure one finds in books.

The foregoing are practices that can be endorsed with a few cautions—the teacher's interests may not be those of his pupils. Careful assessment of this factor should be made before reading aloud selections which he hopes will fall upon enchanted ears. Frequent opportunities for pupil selection of material can help to resolve this problem. A forceful analysis of readings frequently destroys the teacher's major aim—to create a favorable climate for wider and wider reading. Requiring memorization on a routine basis is a practice not easily defended.

Should literature instruction be an individual or a group enterprise? Enjoying literature, or any other art form, is a very personal thing. It is not a passive activity or a spectator sport; there is a direct, intimate relationship between the author and the reader. Perhaps it is within this concept that the greatest hurdle to successful teaching lies. The personal aspects of enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding of literature make it difficult to set down hard and fast rules for successful teaching in a group situation. However, one teaching technique using the study-type question with "built-in" individualization has proved most effective. The following questions, used in a class study of *Wind in the Willows*, illustrates this approach:

Why did Mole tip over the boat? Have you ever made a fool of yourself by trying to do something you were not yet skillful enough to do? What was it? Did Rat react in a pleasant way? Which is better, to laugh at a person's mistakes or to scold him for them?<sup>8</sup>

It is readily apparent that questions of this type tend to deepen a child's understandings and help him relate the incidents in the story to his own experiences.

In the final analysis, a really effective literature program is an individual one. It affords the child an opportunity to journey into other worlds by himself and in his own way. Good literature instruction is a simple procedure. After all—only three things are needed—children, good books, and a vital, imaginative, and enthusiastic teacher.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Shutes, "Study Guide for *Wind in the Willows*," Palo Alto Unified School District, 1956.

## LITERATURE—A DAILY TREAT<sup>1</sup>

### CURRENT PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

William Lyon Phelps was once asked by a young mother for his opinion as to the best time to start developing a taste for good literature. "When is your child due to be born, Madam?" he replied. Dr. Phelps' comment illustrates and supports our belief that literature should have an important place throughout everyone's life.

We, as teachers, are well aware that it has become increasingly important to preserve our literature for present and future generations. Knowledge of literature is essential for balance in this complicated, fast-moving world. Unfortunately, as achievement test results show, many children have almost no knowledge of literature. This condition may be corrected by making literature a vital phase of the elementary school curriculum.

Several school districts in Santa Clara County are attempting to keep literature alive by (1) encouraging the teacher to read aloud to the children every day; and (2) having the children read literature selections independently. Although both practices have merit and should be employed, the first one carries the greatest impact. Through this method, literature has become a "daily treat." For several years, many curriculum consultants have recommended that every teacher, from kindergarten through the sixth grade, devote 15 minutes each day to reading aloud to the class. This period, referred to as the "Story Hour," has become a favorite time during the school day. Children look forward to this period and are disappointed when deprived of the pleasure. The practice of devoting a daily period to reading to children aloud is not a new or different practice. Thousands

<sup>1</sup> Prepared by Mrs. Helen Petersen, Director of Instruction, Campbell Union Elementary School District; Mrs. Grace Rowe Walkington, Director of Instruction and Curriculum Coordinator, Los Gatos Union Elementary School District; and Albert A. Vatuone, Assistant Superintendent, Cambrian Elementary School District, Santa Clara County.

of teachers throughout the country have been reading to their pupils, but they have not been doing so according to any particular plan. The practice of teachers in each grade reading literature to their pupils is an outstanding means of strengthening the elementary school literature program.

The first 15 minutes after lunch is the suggested time for the "Story Hour." This time is especially desirable because it provides pupils opportunity to relax after a strenuous play period before starting their basic work; and it gives them opportunity to enjoy good literature while they are relaxing.

The following examples show how teachers in the schools of Santa Clara County provide for their pupils opportunity to enjoy and otherwise profit from literature. One kindergarten teacher describes a highly satisfying activity based on the familiar folk tale, "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." This familiar story lives again and again as the pupils tell it, using hand puppets and simple props they have made. Another teacher reports that after telling the story with the help of flannelboard cut-outs, she leaves the cut-outs and flannelboard available so that during the day the pupils may retell the story for themselves or for a friend. Later, the pupils make their own flannelboard characters to tell favorite nursery rhymes, poems, fairy tales, and fables. For one first grade class, folk tales of Spanish-speaking countries have a high interest. The children make these stories live by dramatizing the action or by illustrating scenes and placing them on a hand movie scroll. Sometimes chart stories are developed and illustrated by the children. The children show interest in hearing personal anecdotes about the authors of their favorite stories or poems.

Poetry is used in the primary grades in connection with holidays, social studies, or science projects. Children make small booklets containing illustrations of quoted sections. Some teachers duplicate poems to be added to the booklets.

At the intermediate level, a specific time allotment for the teaching of literature is most important. Some teachers take one hour weekly from the developmental reading program for teach-

ing literature; others utilize a social studies period and gear the selections to the culture of the country being studied. A large group reports that all spare time is devoted to highly motivated recreational reading.

Teachers of above average groups have no problem in motivating the pupils to study literature, but teachers of average and below average groups must use many techniques to stimulate and maintain interest. Some ideas for creating and sustaining pupil interest are (1) reading a portion of a story to pupils to stimulate their interest in reading the story; (2) having the pupils make charts and view TV programs, real and simulated; (3) referring to stories similar to those in developmental readers; (4) having the pupils interpret and memorize poetry; (5) encouraging the pupils to co-operate in writing stories and poems; and (6) reading stories and poems to the class daily. The use of book reviews to stimulate pupils' interest in reading is a controversial practice. Some teachers feel that the sharing and checking of the pupils' reviews should be very informal to avoid destroying the pleasure of the experience. Others believe that awards or certificates should be given for the successful completion of a specified number of books.

A survey of Santa Clara County elementary schools revealed an over-all recognition of the importance of literature in the curriculum. However, the emphasis placed upon the teaching of literature varied from incidental efforts to a highly structured program. In the survey it was found that the maintenance of a good library was believed to be basic to every type of literature instruction and that the value of a literature program is proportional to the quality of the library. Literature is introduced and taught in a variety of ways. The schools have only a few literature outlines or written courses of study.

In some of the programs the four fundamental contacts with literature utilized were (1) personal free reading; (2) guided group reading; (3) home reading; and (4) reading aloud.

Personal free reading can best be defined by an example. The teacher schedules time under her guidance for "free" read-



ing (usually one period per week). Occasionally, a lengthy unit of work permits the pupil to read a classic, study the author's life, work on vocabulary, and even present an oral report to the class.

The guided group reading contact is the most structured type of instruction and is very similar to the developmental reading program. The critics of this method say that it tends to dull the palate for literature; others claim that it is the best method for the more advanced readers. A complete unit that might be considered a prime example of this form of literature instruction follows:

#### AMERICAN LITERATURE—EDGAR ALLEN POE

Class: 8th Grade English (advanced)

Unit: This unit will be solely devoted to exploring the poetry and short stories of Edgar Allen Poe and his peculiar and immortal place in American literature. The pupil will be closely oriented to the author's tragic life, so he will be able to perceive close relationships between the man and his mystic and imaginative works. The pupil will also gain a perspective of Poe's philosophy and ideas and be able to draw significant conclusions regarding the manner in which they differ from those of other authors of the period.

- I. Lecture and Discussion on the life of Edgar Allan Poe
  - A. Have a brief class discussion on past reading experiences of the author's works, personal characteristics, and strange, significant style of writing.
  - B. Motivate more effectively by playing the dramatically recorded "The Pit and the Pendulum."
  - C. Have the pupils take careful notes on the life and times of Edgar Allan Poe. Elicit questions and discussions from them.
  - D. Topics to be covered:
    1. Poe's peculiar place in American literature, a subject of controversy

2. Parentage and unfortunate rearing
  3. Poe in England
  4. School days in Richmond and at the University
  5. Seeking his fortune
  6. At West Point
  7. Poe's poetic principles
  8. His literary career and prize story
  9. Poe as a critic
  10. Editor of *Graham's Magazine*
  11. Poe's manner of life
  12. Prose masterpieces and choicest poems
    - a. Discuss briefly, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and others
    - b. Read: "Eldorado"
  13. Poetic style
  14. Social gifts
  15. Poor health and poverty
  16. Sorrow and death
- E. Check pupils' comprehension of the lectures and hold a brief question and answer period.
- II. Critical reading and thinking: "The Raven"
- A. Have pupils turn to page 240, *Prose and Poetry for Appreciation*.<sup>2</sup> Introduce "The Raven," as perhaps the most popular and fascinating of Poe's poems.
  - B. Preparation for reading
    1. Give historical background of "The Raven."
    2. Explain the structure and mood of the poem.
    3. Point out the ideas in writing the masterpiece.
  - C. Have the pupils read the poem silently and then aloud to capture the mood and intent of the author.
  - D. List the complex vocabulary on the board and go over each word with the pupils. Explain the foot-notes.

<sup>2</sup> *Prose and Poetry for Appreciation*. Syracuse, New York: L. W. Singer Co., Inc., 1958

- E. Have the pupils interpret each stanza of Poe's changing mood and ideas.
- F. List some general study questions to check on how well the poem has been understood.
- G. Hold a discussion and evaluation period. Have the pupils compare this poem with a poem by some other writer of this period.

### III. A Change of Mood: "Annabel Lee"

- A. Read the poem aloud to the class and discuss with the class the answers to the questions which accompany it.
- B. Recall some of the tragedies that dominated Poe's life.
- C. Discuss the desired preconceived effects of the poem.
- D. Have the pupils re-read the poem and clarify other questions that were asked in the discussion.
- E. Assign the poem to be memorized.

### IV. The short story: "The Tell-Tale Heart"

- A. Compare the novel to the short story and discuss characteristics of the short story. Framework of the short story and of the novel.
- B. Edgar Allen Poe as the foremost master of the short story and the inventor of the detective story.
  - 1. Stimulate further interest by reading to the class, "The Masque of the Red Death." After the reading, ask them if Poe was interested chiefly in characterization, plot, or setting?
  - 2. Have the pupils write one long paragraph of their impressions of this morbid and tragic tale.
- C. Instruct the pupils to turn to page 153, *Prose and Poetry for Appreciation*. Recall the mood and intensity of the story from the recording.
- D. Introduce new vocabulary and have the pupils silently read the story, keeping in mind the feeling,

effect and theme Poe uses in "The Tell-Tale Heart."

- E. Have the pupils answer comprehension questions to measure the depth of their reading, followed by a class discussion of the questions.
- F. Check the ability of the class to draw inferences and conclusions from pertinent facts.

V. Filmstrips

- A. "Edgar Allan Poe" (McGraw-Hill, 20 frames)

VI. Library Activity

- A. Required List: (short story)

- 1. "The Fall of the House of Usher"
- 2. "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

- B. Extra Reading

- 1. "A Descent into the Maelstrom"
- 2. "The Black Cat"

- C. Have each story reported on dittoed questionnaires (including something of characters, plot, setting, mood and ideas).

- D. Ask each pupil to be ready to discuss the short story.

VII. Final Examination

- A. Have a thorough class review before examination.
- B. Give a comprehensive test.

VIII. Final evaluation of the author's style, techniques, and contribution to American Literature.

Another important contact may be made with literature in home reading. Parents should be encouraged to participate in the program of teaching literature. Often, at the teacher's suggestion, parents provide good titles from their home libraries. They can also help by listening to the child read, or reading to the child until he is old enough to read. The practice of reading good literature aloud will reinforce the school's efforts. Many seventh and eighth grade teachers read aloud to their pupils at

least once a day. Frequently the recordings of nationally famed artists are played for the pupils or the pupils are encouraged to find the recordings and listen to them.

It has been said that a curriculum that does not provide children with literature for enjoyment and experiences in problem solving results in an impoverished educational environment. Some of the areas where growth has been observed are (1) taste for literature; (2) appreciation of literature; (3) ability to read and understand literature; and (4) enjoyment of literature.

The improvement of the children's understanding of literature and their selection of literature to read is one of the most important values of reading to them. A basic library, with the better literary titles, has been provided in each school for teachers' reference only. Only the classics and books of the highest literary value are selected for reading. Although many less desirable titles are brought to school for sharing, they are excluded from the selections to be read in class. Books with only literary value are read during the "Story Hour."

Another value of reading aloud to children is the development of a deeper, more sincere appreciation of character as depicted in stories. Children have gained an insight into some of their cultural traits and a better understanding of themselves through listening to books such as "Charlotte's Web"<sup>3</sup> and "Blue Willow."<sup>4</sup> Several parents relate that after "Charlotte's Web" was read in the fourth grade, their children insisted upon buying their own copies. Stories of family life often develop a greater appreciation of the child's own family.

Teachers are reading to children with the purposes of expanding their horizons of experience and assisting them to move easily into the worlds of make-believe, realism, poetry, and nature. Children's listening comprehension is greater than their reading ability. This gives the teacher the opportunity of bringing the best of literature to all children. The superior pupils are stimulated to read independently, and the slow learners are given pleasures they could never achieve for themselves. Al-

<sup>3</sup> Elwyn White. *Charlotte's Web*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1952.

<sup>4</sup> Doris Gates. *Blue Willow*. New York: The Viking Press, 1940.

though the bright and the slow may have different inner responses, each one enjoys the listening experiences in terms of his age, background, and capacity.

Sheer enjoyment is another reason for reading good literature aloud each day. The shared experience of glimpsing a world beyond the classroom, through the reading of a good book, strengthens the bond between teacher and children.

After a good book has been read, children often want to illustrate it, develop a puppet show from it, or dramatize the story. Even though these culminating activities are simple, the interest displayed proves the value of the "Story Hour" in the curriculum.

Reading aloud to pupils is a natural approach to the teaching of literature. Through listening, each child realizes that he, too, can share in the fascinating experiences of adventure through books. The "Story Hour" instills in the child a love of good stories and a desire to investigate further—strong factors in establishing the good literary taste to guide him to future choices of worth-while reading material.

## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN CALIFORNIA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

JAMES D. YOUNG, *Associate Professor, Orange  
County State College*

When you hold a child, you hold the future of the world in your arms. When you hold within your hand a little seed, you may be holding the future trunk and limbs of a mighty tree. You hold houses, lumber mills, food, shade, whatever potentials that seed may possess, and you know that until that seed is immersed in the proper kind of soil in the proper kind of climate conducive to its growth, and is fed as it should be, those potentials will never be realized. But when the proper conditions maintain, the dramatic efforts of earth and sky begin to show their effects, and as the roots go deeper into the richness of the soil, the trunk and branches reach higher into the warmth of the heavens. Thus, the original identity of the seed is forgotten when there is a tree.

Just so is it true of the life of a child, one who possesses the potentials of action, motion, interrelationships with others, the sensitivity to respond to beauty, gentleness, pain, and sympathy. As he matures and puts forth more and more roots into an expanding literary world, the shell of childhood drops away, and he loses his identity as an immature child. As the materials he reads contribute to the maturing of his personality patterns, he reaches beyond his early roots in the literature of childhood where, with his other experiences, the soil has been prepared so that no literary food is too rich for his intellectual growth.

It is necessary for the classroom teacher to be responsible for providing the child with the proper introductions to literature. At the time of this study, there were only 35 accredited teacher



education institutions in California, including both the public and private colleges and universities.

A questionnaire was sent to each of the 35 accredited teacher education institutions; 22 replies were received. There is a wide range of students enrolled in the Elementary Credential programs offered by the schools—from 15 to 2,200 students. The total enrollment in the elementary credential programs of the schools responding was 10,108. Two schools, with a combined enrollment of 680 students in the elementary credential program, require one unit in children's literature; one school with 30 students and one school with 2,200 students require three units.

The questions in the questionnaire and the responses to each question follow:

Question 1. *In the Fall of 1959, how many people were enrolled in your Elementary Credential Program?*

The answers to this question showed a range of enrollment in the elementary credential program of from 15 to 2,200 students. All responses are shown in the following tabulation:

Number of		Number of	
Schools	Enrollment	Schools	Enrollment
1	15	1	216
1	30	1	237
1	60	1	240
1	80	2	400
1	90	2	500
1	130	2	600
1	150	1	1,500
2	180	1	1,600
1	200	1	2,200

Question 2. *In your elementary credential program, how many units do you require in storytelling, children's literature, and a combination course in children's literature and storytelling?*

The answers received to this question, which all pertain to students enrolled in the elementary credential program follow:

1. The school with 30 students requires storytelling for the kindergarten-primary credential.
2. The school with 240 students requires the elementary education major and an English minor of the credential candidates and in the minor requires the combination course in children's literature and storytelling.
3. The school with 400 students requires that storytelling and literature for children be combined with preparation in social studies, but does not have any other requirement in storytelling or literature.
4. Two schools with enrollments of 180 and 500 students respectively require one unit of children's literature.
5. The school with 30 students requires 2 units of children's literature.
6. The school with 2,200 students requires 3 units of children's literature.
7. Schools enrolling 60, 237, and 600 respectively, a total of 897 students, require 2 units of storytelling and children's literature in a combined course.
8. Schools enrolling 80, 150, 400, and 1,600 respectively, a total of 2,230 students, require 3 units of storytelling and children's literature in a combined course.
9. The school with 180 students requires a 4-unit course in storytelling and children's literature.
10. Two of the schools have no required courses in storytelling, children's literature, nor combined course in storytelling and children's literature.

Question 3. *In your elementary credential program, how many units may be taken as electives in storytelling, children's literature, or a combination course in children's literature and storytelling?*

The answers to question 3, all of which pertain to enrollments in the elementary credential program follow:

1. Four schools enrolling a combined total of 1,785 students allow 2 units as electives in storytelling.

2. Six schools enrolling a combined total of 2,130 students allow 2 units as electives in children's literature.
3. Two schools enrolling a combined total of 456 students allow 3 units as electives in children's literature.
4. Three schools enrolling a combined total of 1,050 students allow 3 units as electives in a combined storytelling and literature course.

Ten of the schools do not provide for electives in storytelling, children's literature, or a combination course in storytelling and children's literature. Two of the schools provide for neither elective nor required courses in storytelling, children's literature, or a combination course in children's literature and storytelling.

Question 4. *Of your credential candidates, approximately what per cent take storytelling, children's literature, or a combination course in children's literature and storytelling?*

The answers to this question, all of which pertain to students enrolled in the elementary credential program follow:

1. *Storytelling*: Four schools, enrolling a combined total of 3,860 students, report a total of 1,757 enrolled in storytelling. Eighteen schools enrolling a combined total of 6,248 report that none of their students take storytelling. Approximately 17.5 per cent of all students in the elementary credential program enroll for a course in storytelling.
2. *Children's literature*: Nine schools had a combined total of 4,196 students enrolled in courses of children's literature. Thirteen schools report that none of their students take children's literature. Approximately 41.5 per cent of all students in the elementary credential program enroll in children's literature.
3. *Combination course in storytelling and children's literature*: Eight schools enrolling a combined total of 3,697 students report 92.1 per cent enrolled in combination courses in storytelling and children's literature.

Some students enrolled in one of 14 schools take a combination course in children's literature and storytelling.

In five of the schools enrolling a combined total of 1,640 students, or 16.2 per cent of students in the elementary credential program, none of the students have a course in storytelling, children's literature, nor one in which storytelling and literature are taught in combination.

Question 5. *Approximately what size classes do you have in storytelling, children's literature, and a combination course in children's literature and storytelling?*

The answers to this question, all of which pertain to students enrolled in the elementary credential program follow:

1. *Storytelling*: Three schools average 25 in each class in storytelling, one averages 20, another 14. One school handles storytelling in the general methods courses in the education department. The other 18 schools did not report average class sizes.
2. *Children's literature*: The range in size of classes in children's literature offered by 10 schools was from 18 to 70 students. One of these schools had an average of 35, five of the schools had more than this number and four fewer. Twelve schools did not report class sizes.
3. *Combination course in storytelling and children's literature*: Nine schools report class sizes that range from 8 to 50 students. In three of these schools there are 27 in the class. Four of the schools have a greater number and five fewer. Thirteen schools did not report class size.

Question 6. *Are the following courses, story telling, children's literature, or combination course in children's literature and story telling, 2-unit courses or 3-unit courses.*

The answers to this question follow:

1. *Storytelling*: Five schools offer a two-unit course in storytelling.
2. *Children's literature*: Six schools offer a 2-unit course in children's literature; three schools a 3-unit course; and one school a 1-unit course.

3. *Combination course in storytelling and children's literature:* Six schools offer a 2-unit course. Four schools report a 3-unit course.

Question 7. *In what departments of the college or university are the following courses taught?* i.e., English, speech, education

- a. storytelling
- b. children's literature
- c. a combination course in storytelling and children's literature

The answers to this question revealed the following information:

1. Storytelling is taught in the speech departments of three schools; in the education department of four schools.
2. Children's Literature is taught in the English departments of three schools; in the education departments of nine schools.
3. Combination course in Children's Literature and Storytelling is taught in the speech department of one school; in the English departments of three schools; in the education departments of seven schools.

Question 8. *How long have you offered courses in storytelling, children's literature, or a combination course in storytelling and children's literature on your campus?*

The following data were secured from the answers to this question:

1. *Storytelling:* One school had been offering storytelling for one year, another for 35 years; the others for some period between these extremes.
2. *Children's Literature:* One school had been offering children's literature for three years, another for 35 years; the others for some period of years between these two extremes.

3. *Combination course in Children's Literature and Story-telling:* One school had been offering the combination course for one year, another for 35 years; the others for some period of years between these two extremes.

Question 9. *Approximately how many volumes of children's books are in your library and how much is spent on children's books each year?*

The answers to this question are presented in tabulated form according to the enrollment of students in the elementary credential program as follows:

Number of students in elementary credential program	Number of volumes of children's books	Number of volumes of children's books duplicated	Amount spent annually for children's books
15			very little
30	400	65	\$30
60	275	very few	\$275
80	450	150	\$350
90	2,700	very few	\$600
130	20	did not know	practically nothing
150	1,000	none	\$300
180	950	175	\$75
180	3,500	did not know	\$2,400
200			\$25-\$75
216			very little
237			\$1,000
240	1,550	250	\$250-\$300
400	100	25	very little
400	3,000	150	\$1,000
500	2,000	did not know	\$250
500	6,500	did not know	\$1,750
600			very little
600	8,000	1,000	\$800-\$1,100
1,500	650	50	\$1,980
1,600	2,000	did not know	\$1,200
2,200	3,200	1,000	\$1,200

The information revealed in this study will provide different kinds of interest for the reader, but to the writer the greatest

concern is with the meager consideration given to children's literature in the professional preparation of teachers in the elementary credential program in the state of California.

Many people seem nonplussed when a distinguished author of adult books or poetry produces a book for children. When they read the books written expressly for children, they discover that the very books which children take to their hearts nourish the hopes, loves, admirations by which nations live. The good book for the child provides for him a firm hold on his heritage and instills growth patterns which create a continuing and developing respect for the written word which men cherish for the insight, wisdom, and grace that have illuminated even the darkest hours of all humanity.

In 1959 alone, there were more than 1,500 new titles in the field of children's literature. Obviously, some of these books offer more than others in the way of literary values. Because of the nature of individual minds, individual experiences, individual methods of capturing ideas in words, it is obvious that literature makes its appeal to the individual and is intelligible only insofar as the individual is able to comprehend its language and interpret the experience therein.

As revealed in this study, many of the libraries connected with the teacher education institutions seem for various reasons, which were not revealed, to omit children's books from their budgets. Others provide very little for the purchasing of new books. We must not overlook the fact that we live in a culture which is urging us to drive toward more and more scientific and mathematical emphasis in education, and we must not overlook the importance of the individual's need to discover his own sustaining and strengthening sources which can illumine and refresh and excite his mind and spirit. The key to contact with our cultural, emotional, and spiritual emergence lies within the literature through which ideas are implanted in the minds of children.

Through the medium of literature, the child is fed ideas which influence his mind, enrich his experiences, liberate his



intellect, articulate for him what he does not know about himself as well as what he does know. Literature heals his spirit, organizes and brings into focus his emotions, and provides a historical linkage, bridging the distance between the culture from which his own culture came, interprets the culture in which he lives, and prepares him for the future.

Whether the teacher teaches literature as such, it is necessary for him to be aware of the types of literature available to children, if for no other reason than to be in closer contact with the changing world and changing needs of the growing child.

As reported in this study, it may be seen that at least 16.2 per cent of the people preparing to teach in the elementary schools have no course in any of the areas of literature. In most of the teacher education programs very little if any study of literature is required. Courses in other disciplines are required, and it is not the purpose of this study to propose that the number of units required in the teacher education programs be lessened in any way, but it is vital to the child in a rapidly growing and changing world to have appropriate opportunity to feed on the rich heritage available to him in literature. The professional preparation of elementary school teachers should, therefore, include the preparation required to make this provision for the children.

Children need more than "grocery store" literature purchased by parents in haste and without giving thought to the needs of the child. They need more than the "tool" of reading as is often provided them in the elementary school program. They need to know that the literature exists, and that it unlocks for them a vast world of knowledge, entertainment, experience, and understanding.

## AN APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND STORYTELLING

PEARL L. WARD, *Associate Professor, Los Angeles State College*  
and JAMES D. YOUNG, *Associate Professor*  
*Orange County State College*

"'Tis a strange sort of poverty to be finding in a rich country." These words were spoken by an Irish immigrant lad in Ruth Sawyer's *The Enchanted Schoolhouse*.<sup>1</sup> Though his words referred to the inadequate and dilapidated school facilities he found in a wealthy and thriving city in America, they can well apply to America today—a land, wealthy with a multitude of fine books, and children who have not discovered them.

At no previous time in history has there been such an astonishingly large number of children's books being published each year. In 1958 alone, there were 1,557 titles published. Yet, in the midst of all this wealth there is great poverty, because so few people partake of these available riches. This poverty may be evidenced in at least the following three ways:

1. Though the books are available, many people are unaware of their existence.
2. Many people are unable to select what is good in literature.
3. Many people simply own books, without discovering what is inside the pages.

There is little excuse for the American adult to be unaware of the existence of and availability of children's books. In nearly every newspaper and periodical there is at some time reference made to children's books, book reviews, book breakfasts, story hours, and autograph parties at the department stores. To those

<sup>1</sup> Ruth Sawyer, *The Enchanted Schoolhouse*. New York: The Viking Press, 1956.

people who wish to own their books, they may buy them at most department stores or bookstores; to all people, the books are available through the public libraries.

It is obviously impossible for all of America's teachers and children to know or to be exposed to only the good and worthwhile books being put on the market, because, to know all the good books, one must know all the books. Unless people learn to discern between what is good and what isn't, they cannot derive the greatest benefit, pleasure, and wisdom that comes from exposure to good books.

The mere possession of books does not guarantee the rewards which can be obtained from them. Remember Petunia, the not-very-bright goose in the story created by Roger Duvoisin? She thought she was wise just because she carried a book under her arm. Later, through her farm friends, she learned that she could not become wise unless she opened the book.

Many American colleges and universities are offering courses in children's literature and courses in storytelling designed to help teachers and parents to come to know and to use good books with children. Because of the role of literature in the growing, maturing personality of the child, and because proper presentation of literature to children is important, truly stimulating and exciting courses in the field can make significant contributions. The teachers in our colleges and universities can inspire their students with the love of reading and the joy that comes from a good story well-told, and these students can then pass on that spark of inspiration to children and young people with whom they come in contact.

Annis Duff in her book *Longer Flight*, says:

Every good book, read at the time purely for the fun of it, adds something to the child's readiness for life and expands the reach of his imaginative understanding . . . Literature alone of all the arts can perform the paradoxical feat of capturing a segment of life in movement while still holding it steadily in focus; and if this serves—as few devoted readers will deny—to sharpen the perceptions and mellow the judgments and enlarge the sympathies of

adults, how much more expansively can it serve the young, whose candid minds and eager hearts are so responsive to education.<sup>2</sup>

In most courses in children's literature, the gigantic responsibility for introducing students to the literature and to the proper methods of presenting literature to children falls on the shoulders of one individual. The two authors of this article taught a course in literature and storytelling in a private college in Los Angeles. The teachers worked as a team in the planning and administration of the course as follows:

1. They planned the course together.
2. They were both always present in the classroom.
3. They taught the class together and in alternation.
4. They kept notes on the proceedings in the class.
5. They planned the tests.
6. They graded the papers, notebooks, storytelling, card files, and special projects.
7. They assigned the final grades.

The two faculty members came from very different departmental responsibilities. One was a professor in the speech department and the other was the college librarian. Each had previously taught courses in the field, so the first task was to co-ordinate materials and ideas and to decide on an approach. The first year, though experimental, was quite successful and was convincing beyond a doubt that the values gained from the combined efforts were much greater than values from separate courses had been. In succeeding years, the difficulties were ironed out and the course was improved upon until it was possible to provide a stimulating and rewarding experience both for the students and for the instructors.

The instructors felt that the process of reading, discussing, and co-ordinating, caused them to stimulate and challenge one another and to feel that they could thus give more to their students. They also felt that this mutual exchange of ideas was one of the most stimulating avenues to learning and became one of the greatest strengths of the program.

<sup>2</sup> Annis Duff, *Longer Flight: A Family Grows Up With Books*. New York: The Viking Press, 1956, pp. 21, 22.

The team teacher idea is a relatively new one in American education. An example is the Newton (Massachusetts) High School which has experimented with this method of teaching. Reports of the experiment indicate that better instruction results when a premium is placed on the individual teacher's skills and aptitudes.

The teacher's knowledge and his transmissible skills are used, and his success not only spurs on his colleagues, but also challenges him to greater success.<sup>3</sup>

The authors of this article can attest to the above statement.

The course to which this article refers was structured as follows:

1. Approximately one week was given to each of the various types of books for children listed below:

- a. Animal
- b. Adventure
- c. Biography
- d. Picture Books
- e. Poetry
- f. Mother Goose
- g. Religious Books
- h. Science Books and Nature Stories
- i. Science Fiction
- j. Family Life Stories
- k. Humorous Stories

From each category, students selected at least one book from each of three different age groupings or grade levels. (Books for the youngest child, for the middle group, and for older children through the sixth grade.)

2. Bibliography cards were handed in each week for the books read in the category which was being studied that week. In addition to the bibliographical information about the book,

<sup>3</sup> Floyd Rinker, "Subject Matter, Students, Teachers, Methods of Teaching, and Space are Redeployed in the Newton, Massachusetts, High School." *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, January, 1958, p. 75.

a short paragraph giving an annotation and evaluation was required on the card.

3. Each student was required to be responsible for the preparation of some kind of display at least one week during the semester, using the following possibilities:

- a. Bulletin board
- b. Mobile
- c. Book display

4. Each week, four or five students, depending on the number in the class, were required to tell a story from the category which was being studied. Thus, an attempt was made to coordinate reading, writing, and speaking. By the end of the semester, it was hoped that the following objectives had been met by this assignment:

- a. The students had learned the need for adequate preparation for telling their stories.
- b. The students had learned the need for careful selection of material in terms of (1) how well it could be presented orally (through telling or reading) and (2) what it meant to them.
- c. The students had learned that a story is not a story until it involves not only the teller but also the audience as an integral part of the story.
- d. Each student was brought to an understanding of his potential as a storyteller and knew that with further experience and practice, he would be successful.
- e. Each student, by being treated as an individual, was encouraged to develop his individual strengths as a storyteller, and his weaknesses were minimized.

5. *Children and Books* by May Hill Arbuthnot<sup>4</sup> was used as the text and foundation of the course. Students read and conducted panel discussions on the assigned chapters in the book. By the end of the semester, it was hoped that the following objectives had been met by this assignment:

<sup>4</sup> May Hill Arbuthnot, *Children and Books*. Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1957.

- a. By being questioned by their colleagues, following a presentation period, their real knowledge of the material was tested.
  - b. An increased knowledge of the use of books, acquaintance with important authors and illustrators in the field, acquaintance with the needs of children as they relate to books, and an introduction to the history of children's books were specific objectives.
  - c. The students had an opportunity to become accustomed to appearances before the class in groups and were less self-conscious when it was time for them to appear alone to tell stories.
6. In addition to the material in the textbooks, supplementary material and help were made available from outside sources as follows:
- a. Awards to children's books and authors, namely:
    - (1) The Newbery Awards
    - (2) The Caldecott Awards
    - (3) The William Allen White Children's Book Awards
    - (4) The New York Herald Tribune Spring Book Festival Awards
    - (5) The Child Study Association Awards
    - (6) Others
  - b. Help from parents and teachers by means of the following activities:
    - (1) Reading to the child at home
    - (2) Purchasing books for the home library
    - (3) Joining book clubs
    - (4) Joining summer reading clubs
    - (5) Correlating the child's mental and chronological age interests with his literary interests
    - (6) Correlating the child's extracurricular reading with the curriculum
    - (7) Storytelling hours in the library
    - (8) Going to the Public Library regularly



- (9) Pointing out the importance of format in getting the child's first interest
  - (10) Going to book fairs and book breakfasts and autographing parties
  - (11) Using posters and mobiles
  - c. Supplementary reading, and bibliographical tools:
    - (1) *Bequest of Wings* and *Longer Flight* by Annis Duff
    - (2) *Treasure for the Taking* by Anne Thaxter Eaton
    - (3) *Parent's Guide to Children's Reading* by Nancy Larrick
    - (4) *Children's Catalogue*
    - (5) *Newbery Medal Books: 1922-1955* by Bertha E. Mahoney and Elinor Whitney Field
    - (6) *Illustrators of Children's Books: 1744-1945* by Bertha E. Mahoney
    - (7) Hornbook
    - (8) Elementary English
    - (9) Reviews for Children's Books in adult magazines, e.g., *Saturday Review*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Atlantic Monthly*
  - d. Publishers of children's books
    - (1) How a typical juvenile department operates, e.g., selecting manuscripts, planning the format, and execution of the whole plan
    - (2) How to evaluate the publisher's product
7. The students were given the opportunity to present a special project at the end of the semester, to be selected from the following possibilities:
- a. Notebook or scrapbook containing clippings and articles from the newspapers and magazines to make the students aware of the interest in literature and storytelling being demonstrated in places other than in the classroom.
    - (1) Feature articles are often devoted to the illustrators or authors of children's books.

- (2) References to children's stories and books often show the influence of children's literature on everyday living, e.g., the use of characters from children's literature on advertising, the reference to children's literature in many philosophical, religious, and political articles.
- (3) The student becomes aware of the special events such as book breakfasts at which authors and illustrators are featured, dinners at which Newbery and Caldecott awards are given, the appearance of great storytellers at local auditoriums.
- b. The writing and illustrating of a story for children to help the student to learn to evaluate the plot, theme, and style of a story.
  - (1) As he writes his story, he discovers the problems of writing and learns more about evaluating content by reference to such sources as the December, 1956 issue of the *Writers Magazine*, *Writing for Young People* by Mable Robinson and *Writing Juvenile Fiction* by Phyllis Whitney.
  - (2) He learns the problems of marketing a manuscript, which is of interest to some students.
- c. The decorating of a file box for the bibliography cards to be used in the elementary school classroom or library.
  - (1) The student learns the importance of enlivening the classroom and the importance of a good setting.
  - (2) He learns the need of associating the reading of books and the telling of stories with fun and pleasures.

Through the many and varied activities of the course, the instructors strive for the goals which David Daiches states so well. "Education does not consist of knowing a series of books, however good, but in the acquisition of certain habits of mind and certain kinds of intellectual responsibility and aesthetic awareness." It is the same sort of thing which Annis Duff says

"sharpens perceptions and mellows judgments and enlarges sympathies." An attempt is made to create an atmosphere or climate in which books and reading and storytelling have vital meaning and out of which come these qualities of mind and heart.

## IN-SERVICE EDUCATION FOR THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE <sup>1</sup>

The other articles in this issue of the Journal present the various philosophies of teaching literature, current practices in teaching literature, and ways of improving instruction. The theme, "It all depends on the classroom teacher" runs throughout them. In one article it is stated that the teacher must be enthusiastic, familiar with children's literature, willing to spend extra time in preparation, and patient in guiding children's experiences. A program of preservice education in the teaching of literature which is designed to help teachers develop these qualities and skills is described. In this article consideration is given to in-service education programs that can be developed to give further help. Assuming that the basic skills and understandings of the profession are already part of the teacher's portfolio, we are concerned now with the special needs of the teacher in improving literature instruction in his class.

### INSPIRATION

To begin or extend a program of teaching literature, the teacher needs inspiration. This may come from a personal, inner appreciation and love of good literature which the teacher brings "ready-made" to the classroom. It may develop through the contagious enthusiasm of another teacher, a supervisor, a consultant, or any other person. And it may also be acquired through first-hand contact with a book, play, motion pictures, or television production.

The in-service education program should, therefore, provide for meetings devoted to the inspiration and motivation of classroom teachers. In Santa Clara County, this has been done

<sup>1</sup> Prepared at the Office of the Santa Clara Superintendent of Schools by Mrs. Lola Fay Gordon, General Supervisor and Co-ordinator of Science and Social Studies, and Myron Schussman, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services.

through (1) large group meetings in which teachers listen to another teacher, a librarian, or an author discuss literature and read prose or poetry aloud with them; and (2) small study groups in which the emphasis is on sharing and enjoyment between and among the teachers, rather than on the more prosaic planning and preparing for classroom lessons. In all such activities, the key is the enjoyment of good literature by teachers themselves. Without this basic spark, no fire can be struck in the classroom.

Teachers' enthusiasm for literature must also be nurtured by the administrators, including the building principal and the central office staff. No amount of warmth and enjoyment can survive a dash of cold water from the boss! And on the other hand, even a hint from a supervisor that he, too, enjoys a certain poem or story will give the teacher great encouragement and support.

#### FAMILIARITY WITH LITERATURE

Next to personal enthusiasm, the most important attribute of one who would succeed in teaching literature is knowledge of children's books and adult literature. The teacher must be familiar with the style and content of many types of stories and should be on "speaking terms" with the works of many authors. One way to accomplish this is to enlist teachers help in writing study guides for books. In developing thought-provoking questions about a story for his pupils, the teacher will acquire increasingly deep insight and appreciation of the author's work.

Another aid in this respect is to make good books available to the teacher. Traveling book displays should be brought into the school district, and permanent book collections in public and school libraries should be open at hours when teachers can use them. Because the teacher's time is too limited to permit wholesale coverage of the newer children's books, selected lists, such as those published by national associations, should be provided. In this way the judgments of librarians and other experts serve as a screen so that the teacher's energies can be spent in reading and skimming only the cream of the crop.

### Know-How

Going beyond enthusiasm for and familiarity with good literature, the teacher needs to know how to present literature to his pupils. Participation in extension courses and workshops in methods of teaching literature will help teachers to acquire the "know-how" required for the presentation. Small committees or groups within a school faculty may also be utilized to provide for a cross-pollination of ideas which often results in the development of valuable teaching practices. And help in the teaching of literature that may be given by a supervisor or principal with groups and individuals may be extremely beneficial. In Santa Clara County, very fine results have been obtained from sessions in "good teaching conferences"—in which a teacher presents in a short 20- or 30-minute period several ideas or techniques which he has found to be effective in teaching literature.

Materials developed on a school district- or county-wide basis can be helpful to the teacher. These may include suggested book report forms, study guides, check lists of pupil activities, publications of creative writing by children, and reading lists. However, it must be remembered that such aids are the means, not the end of the instruction program. They should enable the teacher to go on to establishing his own purposes, planning pupil activities consistent with the purposes, and developing forms and guides to fit the activities.

## LITERATURE AND CREATIVE WRITING

ZETA O. DOYLE, *Director of Instruction, San Diego  
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Literature is at once creative writing and a spark for creative writing. It is the beginning and end of the chain of communication which relates to strong feelings, attitudes, and appreciations. In this paper, use of literature as a motivation for creative writing will be emphasized.

Any person with ideas and feelings of his own strong enough to force him to communicate these to others in writing is creating in writing. His expression is creative in that it presents his original feelings, thoughts, and points of view. It starts with creative thinking. Such writing sometimes becomes literature. This happens when the piece is of high quality due to its clear, vivid, fresh expression and because it presents an idea or a message of important interest to readers. Holding this belief, one may say that some of the best creative writing of children approaches literary quality.

### HOW CREATIVE WRITING GROWS IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers continue to strive to find the answer to the question, "How does creative writing grow in the classroom?" The answer could be given by drawing an analogy to growing plants. Of first importance are earth, sunlight, water, and climate. In the classroom there is a mixture of 30 live, energetic, curious children, and an interested, perceptive, enthusiastic, teacher who can provide the right growing climate for thoughts to form and ideas to sprout into words. When plants are fed, they grow, flower, and bear fruit. The food for the creative spirit is vivid, real experience and pleasant literary experience. These ingredients set the child's attitude toward writing and determine the substance, quality, and form of creative writing. Children



must have intensely strong ideas and thoughts for them to want to put forth the effort to write. The mechanics of writing, even for adults, are natural deterrents to expression. It is hard to write, particularly for children who are learning handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction. Teachers must plan particularly strong motivation and must appreciate fully the efforts of pupils in order to encourage them to write.

#### HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO LIKE POETRY

Children seem to learn so much by imitation and example that it sometimes seems that they learn almost more this way. Therefore, the teacher who obviously enjoys poetry and reads it frequently throughout the school day as a natural part of almost any type of learning experience will give children the idea that poetry is pleasant, interesting, and relates to every-day things. Poetry does not deal only with fairies, rainbows, and fancy, but also with mundane daily experiences. Soon this "teacher reading" will naturally transfer to children. A child one day will request permission to read a favorite poem to the class, perhaps during the opening period of the day. Many teachers in this easy way have built such a demand for sharing favorite poems that children request scheduling poetry reading every morning. None of this enjoyment is tied into a teacher request for writing poetry.

#### HOW APPRECIATION FOR PROSE IS BUILT

Appreciation for beautiful prose is built by methods similar to those by which children learn to like poetry. Sometimes vivid words or word pictures are found during a reading discussion which is enjoyed in great measure by the pupils. Or, when the teacher is reading or telling a story to the class, an occasional stop to appreciate a humorous expression, or words that frighten, or sparkle, enriches the pupils' listening and builds their appreciation for good writing. Following a science experiment or observation lesson, children might read an author's clear delineation of his discovery. Appreciation of how well

selected words have stated thoughts and facts clearly is absorbed by the class.

### HOW CHILDREN BEGIN TO WRITE POETRY

By employing a gradual approach such as has thus far been discussed in this article, it is easy for the teacher to say one day during the important oral language part of the written language lesson, "Bob, I think your idea might make a poem." Through imitation then of what has been heard and felt, Bob, if he chooses, can write in poetic form. Meter, rhythm, and rhyme need not be studied at elementary school level. They appear in the writing when children and teacher have enjoyed enough poetry together.

Creative writing attempts will become more frequent and later flourish because the teacher has often found a lovely line of pupil verse to read to the class or a vivid sentence to share. When this building, through highlighting the good, has continued for awhile, children will not mind having a line of poetry or a sentence placed on the board anonymously for class study and revision. They will not object to referring to the pages in their language texts where they can learn how to improve and polish their work. It will not rankle when they have to revise and copy over their pieces. They remember that if they do a good job, their writing might be mounted as the "Poem of the Day" in the Writer's Corner or sent to the school magazine for possible publication.

### HOW CHILDREN IMPROVE WRITING CONTENT AND FORM

The use of the functional approach described in the preceding section and providing many written language experiences make it possible for children to improve both the content and form of their writing. Any written language lesson can be a creative writing experience since it starts with the child's own original ideas which are important to him. He learns to improve form so that he can have his ideas read and understood by the reader. It is significant to remember that there must be

ideas to start with, there must be intake before there is anything to give out. It is purposeless to create in a vacuum. Who would care about the result? It is also important to remember that praise is given only for high quality work or for a child's best efforts. Hughes Mearns in *Creative Power*<sup>1</sup> says, "Experience with the better, brings not contempt, as the proverb foolishly avers, but affection; and a real knowledge of the good will always drive out a taste for the inferior." Form is important after ideas are put down. Evaluation, instruction, and improvement in handwriting, spelling, organization, and construction are all parts of the polishing process.

The gradual development through exposure to many interesting real experiences, many vital literary experiences, and many opportunities to write for both practical and personal purposes takes time but it works. Usually, all children are able to write with relative freedom, according to their varying abilities, and to produce something worth while by about March or April of the school year. From then on to June, teachers reap their greatest reward of quality writing.

#### HOW CHILDREN'S WRITING MATURES PROGRESSIVELY

As we think of standards for pupil writing at a given grade level or of pupil growth from grade to grade, let us remember some of the following ideas:

There will be great variation in pupil ability to do creative writing—wide differences in stages of individual development, right in the same classroom. Children will always tell their ideas first; write their own expressions later.

Creative expression may be in either prose or poetic form. Children will enjoy writing rhyming poems. Many children will write rhymes at first whether we want them to or not. It is good to have rhyme in poetry when sense is not sacrificed. Children delight in musical cadence. Let them write their rhymes, but at the same time, gradually develop their appreciation and taste to the point where children learn that the idea

<sup>1</sup> Hughes Mearns, *Creative Power: The Education of Youth in the Creative Arts*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958.

beautifully expressed in their own way is of first importance.

Secondly, children must learn that if they are writing poetry, the reader must feel a rhythm in what they write. It must sing or swing. If, in addition, they can add sensible rhyme (unless they are intentionally writing a jingle or a nonsense verse) which enhances the idea expressed, this is excellent—but much harder. Rhyming patterns will follow the natural expression and rhythm which elementary school children feel. They need not be studied.

The following poems from different volumes of *Creative Writing*, the annual elementary school publication of the San Diego City Unified School District, illustrate different qualities of rhymed verse:

*The Cow*

A cow is just lovely  
To give her milk away—  
When all she ever gets to eat is  
Hay! Hay! Hay!

—Dictated by a  
Kindergarten child

*Little Horned Toad*

We have a little horned toad  
The bug he ate was quite a load.

—Marsha, Grade 1

*Man in the Moon*

The man in the moon  
Is so bright and high  
He looks like a silver ball  
Floating in the sky.

Sometimes he's a cradle  
Rocking in the air.  
Little angels crawl inside  
And fall asleep up there.

—Linda, Grade 5

*Outdoors*

The bay is big and blue today  
The mountains are big and far  
away.

—Frankee Dee, Grade 2

*The Night*

Have you ever seen night march over day  
And chase the sun and light away?  
The night that brings the stars and moon,  
Those beautiful things that leave so soon.  
The night that lets us slumber so,  
And in the morn creeps away on tiptoe!

—Louise, Grade 6

After children have put their ideas down in writing, they must then learn to do the polishing necessary to put it in a form for others to read. In this way, they learn to appreciate the courtesy that is due the reader. If someone is going to read his piece, a writer must make it easy and pleasant for the reader to get his ideas.

Children will write fragmentary, rather disconnected thoughts at first.

The following example illustrates this point:

*Wait*

Come back to me, airplane—  
Don't go so fast.  
You go like the wind.  
I can't go as fast as you—  
I am only a little boy.

—Robert Smith, Grade 1

Often the expressions of imagination of young children are closely related to themselves. There is much "I" and "me" in their writing.

My feet are heavy,  
There's sand in my shoes,  
It goes up and down pushing my  
feet out.  
I have to curl up my toes.  
I want to walk without my shoes.

"Whi-sh!" went the wind,  
Down went the leaves.  
"Wheel!" went the wind  
Up my sleeves.

—Mirium, Grade 1

—Marcella, Grade 1

Slightly more mature imagination is in this description:

*The First Christmas*

It was cold in the barn  
But Baby Jesus was warm,  
Mary kept him warm  
In her arms.

—Patsy, Grade 2

These next examples also show growing imagination:

*Sleep*

Sleep is a nestful of pigeons.  
They sing, and make me  
Go to sleep.

—Tommy, Grade 3

*Tears*

Rain is silver drops from  
Angels' eyes when they're crying.

—Joe Etta, Grade 3

*Rain God*

Eagle of the Rain God,  
Bring the rain we need so bad.  
Come and bring the rain.  
Our crops are thirsty for water.  
We need the food to eat.  
Oh, mighty Rain God,  
The people of our village pray for  
rain;  
Bring us rain,  
Rain, rain, lightning, wind.  
Dark clouds—pour,

Pour your rain down  
On our dry lands,  
On the pueblo,  
And on the sands.

—Cynthia, Grade 3

*A Spring Stream*

In springtime when the snow is  
gone,  
There's a stream in its place that's  
bouncing along—  
Such a merry little stream  
And a cold one, too,  
I'd like to be that stream  
Now wouldn't you?  
The stream to the fish is mother,  
To them she is their night cover.  
The flowers get their water from  
the stream,  
I really do think she should be  
called queen.

—Lucianne, Grade 4

Growth in vocabulary and complexity of writing comes with additional real experience, more experiences with literature, and with growth in imagination. They all mature gradually together. Writing begins to show keener observations, more vivid description, connotation, and association of ideas.

*My Trip to Los Angeles*

Call for a reservation,  
Pack a bag,  
Go to the airport,  
Weigh the luggage,  
Buy the ticket,  
Count the money,  
Wait in the waiting room,  
Here comes my plane!  
Goodbye! Goodbye!  
Away we go!

—Ann, Grade 2

*Looking Up*

I used to watch for stars at night,  
But now I watch for satellites.  
I used to look for the moon-man's  
face,  
But now I look for the man-in-  
space.

—Gary, Grade 4

*Frog*

You little flying saucer with  
bowlegs!  
Are you jet propelled?  
I wonder!

—Bobby, Grade 5

The following examples show the effects of growth in vocabulary.

*People*

Tall people, short people,  
Thin people, fat!  
Lady so dainty,  
Wearing a hat!  
Straight people, dumpy people,  
Man dressed in brown,  
Baby in a buggy—  
These make a town.

—Susan, Grade 5

*A Poem for Christmas*

C is for Christ who in a manger lay.  
H is for herald angels that sang on that day.  
R is rejoice because Jesus was born,  
I is for incense that burned that morn.  
S is for star that day;  
T is for trouble that vanished away.  
M is for manger, where the new baby lay.  
A is for angelic songs we sing.  
S is for Saviour who'll come again some day.

—Judy, Grade 5

*The Clouds*

I went out and looked toward the sky  
And noticed the picturesque clouds drifting by.  
Some were as stately as a strong mighty tree,  
Some were as windswept as waves on a stormy sea.  
Some were like giants with a mighty blow,  
Some were silhouetted with a luminous glow.



And then all at once to my dismay,  
All the clouds just drifted away.

—Donald, Grade 6

### *Wild Spirit*

Why is the spirit of a wild horse proud  
Like a fast-flying meteor, a swift-flying cloud?  
Is it because he is the last of a proud race,  
Fast disappearing from the earth's barren face?  
Does this he know as he faces the sun—  
That the day will come when he can no longer run  
From the ropes and spurs and whips of man?  
Is this why he holds his head up high—  
For he knows that soon his race must die?  
Is this why the spirit of a wild horse is proud  
Like a fast-flying meteor or a swift-flying cloud?

—Christine, Grade 6

### *Water Goes On*

Water goes roving, roaming  
Over dry land it goes:  
Cutting out cliffs,  
Filling up gullies and ditches,  
Never stopping—  
On it goes.  
Tearing up bushes,  
Pulling up soil,  
Flooding land,  
Water goes on.

Water goes on—  
Sometimes calm and smooth,  
Sometimes rough and raging,  
Whining and crying,  
Singing and humming,  
Splashing against rocks,  
Running up on walls of dirt,  
Swirling around in circles.  
Now it's roaring,  
Now it's quiet—  
Water goes on.

—Mary, Grade 6

### *Three Strikes—You're Out!*

The announcer's voice came loud and clear  
Over the mike one day,  
Where two Coast League teams were meeting,  
In pennant baseball play.  
The bleachers were filled with fans  
Yelling and screaming with joy,  
As their favorites came up to bat  
They'd shout, "Let's hit it, boy!"

The umpire stood determined  
To call the pitches right,  
But the managers were sure  
The "ump" had lost his sight.  
"Strike 3," he'd call, "You're out!"  
And the batter would throw his bat,  
While the others tossed the ball around  
And the pitcher straightened his hat.

—Kathy, Grade 6

*Silver Bells*

Silver bells ring out good cheer,  
Reminding the people that Christmas is near.  
Hurrying, scurrying all around town.  
Shopping, buying, and looking around.  
Clerks are so busy; their fingers are flying.  
People are shoving, laughing, and sighing.

—Willia Jean, Grade 6

As children become more mature in their writing they are able to plan and follow through a developmental sequence in their work. This is slightly evident in the following pieces. It will be more common in the work of junior and senior high school pupils who have studied poetic and prose forms.

*Freedom of Speech*

Freedom of speech is important  
To everyone who prizes liberty.  
Without this one great freedom  
There could never be a real democracy

Because

When the people of a country  
Can't speak what they know to be true,  
A dictator will take over  
And democracy will be through

Because

When the people of a country  
Can't teach what they've been taught,  
Then any dictator who comes along  
Simply cannot be fought

Because

When truth can't be printed in the papers

Or broadcast on radio,  
People cannot tell the public  
What the public ought to know  
Because  
Freedom of speech is not only  
The right to speak what you think,  
It's the right to broadcast and print—  
In fact it's democracy's vital link.

—Jack, Grade 6

*My Piece for Peace*

A button is pushed and a wild thing is born,  
Gracefully seeking its place out in space.  
From the face of the earth a bit has been torn  
To prove to others we, too, need a place  
To teach love and peace, and not hate and scorn.  
Each monster now costs a million or more,  
So paying the taxes is part of our chore.  
Our very lives depend on the thing,  
Please God, may my part be used for the peace  
it can bring.

—Sharon, Grade 6

*Perpetual Motion*

One of Newton's three laws of motion is that if a body is at rest, it tends to remain at rest unless acted upon by an outside force.

This pertains to perpetual attitude, too. Perpetual attitude is the same way of thinking all the time, such as, "I'm always right," "Let's do what I want to do." Thus, perpetual thinking can be harmful to the perpetual thinker. If this attitude continues, it begins to grow on the person. He becomes used to having people "bow down before him."

Unless, of course, he is acted upon by an outside force. This may be supplied in many different ways. But, if this attitude has been on the person for a long time, a sharp contact to the body may be necessary. In some cases this rehabilitation may take some time, but it usually helps the person.

—Jeff, Grade 5

Children will more and more frequently desire to express themselves verbally and experiment in writing.

#### SUMMARY

To summarize ideas presented one starts by highlighting the importance of the teacher who must thoughtfully plan and teach effective literature and language lessons. Equally basic is the principle that experience and example are powerful educative forces. Therefore, when dedicated teachers sharpen their own perceptions and appreciations—"come alive" themselves—their examples will stimulate the natural awareness and curiosity of children. These teachers will be able to generate sparks to ignite the creative thinking and imagination of their pupils. Hughes Mearns, in "Creative Power," clearly phrased an added related thought, "We shall find as a constant factor a teacher who understands some of the mysterious ways of the creative spirit. . . ." A final point to remember is that children who have had frequent exposures to literature and good writing will develop taste for the best, and high standards of quality in their own work will result.

## YOU CAN RELEASE CREATIVITY IN CHILDREN

HELEN HEFFERNAN, Chief, Bureau of Elementary Education,  
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Teachers of the very young delight in the inventive imagination children reveal in their painting, modeling, unusual designs, dramatic re-creation of adult activities, rhythmical interpretation, and their original and discriminating use of words to describe their experiences. But what happens? As they continue into the middle grades, these same children tend to become fixed, rigid, fearful, and conforming.

Teachers are baffled. What causes this change? On every hand the teacher encounters society's demand for creative people. How can a teacher release the creativity of her pupils?

Children interact with the works of men and the world of nature. The whole aim of their existence is to become one with their world—to grow up to full participation in it. They receive impressions, but often do not express and share with others their thoughts and feelings. Unless *impression* is followed by *expression* in some form, the child fails to achieve the totality of experience. The result is continual frustration, a loss of spontaneous inquisitiveness, a loss of the zest for life.

If children are to be creative they must experience vitally and must have the support of a physical and social environment in which they may express themselves freely and honestly. Psychologists say that nothing is truly learned until it is externalized in some form. All effective education then is essentially creative. The individual attempts to make complete through some form of externalization his relationship with his environment.

Creative expression is not something that happens at a certain prescribed time on Friday afternoon! It emerges from the total educative experience that the school provides. To stimulate

creativity, the teacher must first give thought to the child's school environment.

Perhaps the most important task of the teacher is to supply an environment favorable to creativity by making available to children rich and challenging materials. The list is long and limited only by the ingenuity of the teacher and the value the community places on the education of its children. Materials include well selected stories and poems; paints and clay; wood and tools; rhythm instruments, records, and music; real objects; science equipment; pictures, films, and filmstrips. If education results from the interaction of the learner with his environment, then it is reasonable to conclude that the richer the environment, the more will the child be motivated to enter into it, to interact with it, and make it a part of himself.

But the teacher also is a part—and without doubt the most significant part—of the child's learning environment. An uncreative teacher cannot release creativity in others. What are the characteristics of a creative person? Creativity requires the capacity to change, to be different, to react in varied and unanticipated ways. A creative person has broad interests, experiments with a variety of media, has many things to do, many problems to solve. A creative person is not afraid to dream big, to follow an intriguing idea, to arrange and rearrange ideas and materials into new patterns and designs. He recognizes the value of co-operation but is not afraid to act alone and independently.

Fortunate, indeed, are children who have a creative teacher. Such a teacher studies each child, she gains insight into the causes of a child's behavior, she learns to see each child in relation to his peers, to his parents, and to himself. She studies the child's work for clues concerning him; his daily expressions in talking, writing, painting, and every other form of behavior reveal the person he is in the process of becoming. She finds time for casual conversations with a child; for studying his preferences, his use of time and resources.

At the very heart of the release of creativity is the *quality of guidance* the teacher gives, which will stimulate children to feel needs and to satisfy them in meaningful ways. In other words, there should be in progress a dynamic, ongoing program of education. The experiences which result from the interaction of the children with the environment must be personal and vital to them. The experiences must grip children emotionally in order that they be impelled to "say something" about them. The "saying" may be in a wide variety of media—painting, talking, writing, dramatic and rhythmic expression, experimentation, and social relationships.

As teachers, can we discover any orderly sequence or steps in the creative act which may serve to guide us? Observation of children who have been living vitally and fruitfully in well conceived school situations seem to reveal certain essential steps in the creative act.

1. The child must have rich *sensory experience* as a basis for any creative expression. He must see, hear, smell, taste, or feel through vivid, firsthand sensory impressions.
2. He must *react emotionally* to his sensory experience; he must feel deeply about what he has experienced.
3. He must *wish to share* and communicate his experience to someone else.
4. He must have the *means available* to select an appropriate medium of expression.
5. He must learn to *subject himself to the disciplines* involved in the ultimate successful use of the medium.
6. He must *achieve a measure of success*.

How do these six steps work in a specific learning situation? A creative teacher of a group of eight- and nine-year-olds was guiding her children in a study of life in a harbor community. The children made a trip to the harbor to find out about the different kinds of ships and how they function. The teacher knew that this experience would yield many vivid sensory experiences which would make children want to paint, to



construct ships and harbor facilities, to write stories, to create songs, to express rhythmically, to engage in dramatic play about ships and harbors. She realized that through her guidance she could deepen their sensory impressions so they would be able to express their feelings about the harbor in effective words.

And so they listened to the sounds of the harbor. They talked about

the lapping of the waves against the piling  
the creaking of the winches  
the clanking of the chains  
the tooting of the whistles  
the harsh cry of the gulls

They struggled to translate what they heard into descriptive words. The teacher made some notes of what they said to help them recall the experience later.

Similarly, the teacher deepened their sensory impressions of seeing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. In attempting to express how each sensation seemed to them the children developed all the gamut of feelings that grow out of a vital shared experience. Here was a teacher who helped children to *see*, not merely to *look*; to *hear*, not merely to *listen*; to experience so deeply that things were revealed which escape those who are less discerning.

Upon their return after the harbor trip, the children were helped to sort out the most important parts of their experience. The teacher made some charts with the children so they "would not forget" what they had seen and heard and smelled and felt and tasted. By emphasizing the importance of what they had said, the teacher gave satisfaction to the children for their desire to share and communicate.

The teacher expected an incubation period following the direct experience. For certain children the period was short and they were soon ready to express their impressions in painting, dramatic play, and rhythms. For the children who wished to express themselves in writing the teacher provided technical assistance with spelling and mechanics of composition. Several chants and little songs were suggested by the harbor sounds

and here again the teacher helped with the difficult problem of recording the notation. Many children moved ahead quickly and with confidence in the construction of tugboats, fireboats, freighters, liners, and the necessary appurtenances of the harbor. In other words, children selected various media, used the selected medium so far as their present abilities permitted, and thus grew in ability to use the medium more effectively.

Evaluation is an integral part of the process of expression. As the children grow in their ability to engage in purposeful expression, their power to evaluate increases. Only as children grow and know that they are growing do they receive the stimulation which success brings, and feel the inner motivation to seek new experiences and begin again the sequence to creative learning. In the process, children achieve new power to express themselves, and raise their standards by critical appraisal of their creative product.

The guidance of the teacher continues to be the major ingredient in the release of creativity. The teacher creates the climate of acceptance and appreciation for the child's effort out of the warmth of her own personality and understanding of children. She encourages communication. She rejoices in colorful and imaginative expression. She is sensitive to the child's increasingly more discriminating interpretation of experience and expresses her satisfaction. In all of these carefully devised and subtle ways, the creative teacher contributes to the development of creative people for a world in need of their unique contribution.

## NO EASY ANSWER

AFTON DILL NANCE, *Consultant in Elementary Education,  
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Adventure with Books, New Horizons with Books, and Make Friends with Books are slogans used in recent years to call attention to Book Week. They also suggest the many ways in which good reading enriches life and broadens horizons. Most modern educators would agree with the role of reading as it was defined in 1936 by a national committee on reading:

. . . to broaden the vision of readers, to make their lives richer and more meaningful, to enable them to meet the practical demands of life more effectively; to develop social understanding and the ability to use reading in the intelligent search for truth; to promote a common culture and a growing appreciation of the finer elements in contemporary life; and to stimulate wholesome interests in reading.<sup>1</sup>

Articles in this issue of the *Journal* have analyzed how the study of literature helps children attain these goals. They have told how reading comforts the troubled, amuses the lonely, sharpens the perceptions, sets imaginations soaring, and provides the information on which sound decisions can be made. They have told how literature can help one understand himself and others. Over and over the articles have said that good reading is essential to a full understanding and appreciation of the beauty and complexity of life.

If reading is to perform these roles in life, then *how* it is taught is important. Research findings<sup>2</sup> support this statement. The progress of two groups of children was observed. One group was taught by an elaborate phonetic system and the

<sup>1</sup> National Society for Study of Education. *The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report*. 36th Yearbook, Part I. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press. 1937. pp 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*. Edited by Chester W. Harris and Marie R. Liba. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1960.

other by a method which emphasized a thoughtful reading attitude and meaningful experience. The first method produced ability to follow the line and to pronounce all the words, but not a vital concern for the content. However, a significant outcome of the second method was keen interest in the content, although progress in word recognition was slower and ability to follow the line not so accurate. Obviously, the two methods started children on different approaches to maturity in reading.

Girls and boys cannot achieve the modern goals of reading by "saying the words" or by "following the lines." They must understand and appreciate what they read. Learning to read at the level demanded today is a complex process. In times of confusion and change the lure of the easy answer to such complex problems is almost irresistible. For several years, the public has been bombarded with statements concerning the inability of today's children to read. A barrage of highly emotionalized half-truths from several sources has conditioned poorly informed segments of the public and even some educators to accept at face value the claims that proper teaching of phonics will solve all reading problems for all children. Although research<sup>1</sup> indicates that some instruction in phonics is justified, evidence secured in several studies advises caution against vigorous emphasis on phonics early in the first grade. The research also shows that children need a varying amount of work with phonics in order to read effectively. Some children do not seem to need any specific phonetic drill, others profit by varying amounts of systematic instruction.

Research findings such as these cast doubt on the wisdom of methods which advocate extensive instruction in phonics for all children as an initial reading experience. Certainly dividing a one syllable word into three parts to illustrate the two vowel rule hardly seems an appropriate way to introduce a child to the joys of reading. Neither does reading Vachel Lindsay's "The Wind is the North Wind's Cooky" and then

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1123.

using this experience for teaching the sound of the "oo" in Cooky encourage a love of poetry.

The flood of new materials in phonics should be carefully studied by responsible educators, and the strong and weak points of these materials should be pointed out to interested citizens in the community. Claims that all children can be taught to read by deceptively simple methods should be investigated before the materials are purchased.

Any standard dictionary carries the basic phonetic information. All of the accepted and widely used reading texts also carry carefully worked out systems for teaching phonics. Spelling series and spelling manuals for use of pupils and teachers carry the same information. Certainly no teacher who felt that the children under his care needed help in phonetic analysis would have to go far to obtain excellent teaching materials for this purpose. However, the standard and carefully worked out materials do not make any rash promises regarding the hundred per cent success of the method. They do not say that experienced teachers are unnecessary, or that class size has no relation to the success of the method. These are the claims of those who are flooding the market with a wide variety of materials planned to solve all reading problems through increased instruction in phonics. Some of these systems introduce the vowels first and some the consonants; several would base experience in art, music, and literature on the sounds of the various letters. The teachers' guides to these methods seem to suggest that the phonics-centered curriculum is the wave of the future.

It is true that some of the current handbooks on solving problems through phonics include sound advice which has been accepted and used for many years. The enthusiasm of the teacher (but not his skill) is emphasized as essential. The recommendation that children should not be allowed to fail especially in their initial attempts is also sound, as is the recommendation that instruction should be based upon the children's

own experience. However, phonetic analysis is credited with all the successes of the methods. Young children are under great necessity to please the adults in their lives. Because of this deep need for basic security they will try to learn almost anything that is presented to them. To restrict these eager learners to excessive phonetic analysis is exploitation. With all the world and outer space to explore through books, children should not be confined to learning the story of "d"—even if puppets and pictures are suggested to sweeten the dose.

Children's precious time and taxpayer's money, to say nothing of teacher's energies, should be expended in activities of significance. Only persons with a background of professional training in the field are qualified to make complex decisions regarding method and curriculum. The public interest is served when the right of teachers to exercise the competencies for which they are employed is recognized. The lure of the easy answer must be resisted if girls and boys are to love books and learning.

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CALIFORNIA JOURNAL OF  
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Official publication issued quarterly by  
the California State Department of  
Education, Sacramento 14, California.  
Entered as second class matter at the  
Post Office at Sacramento, California.

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED



